It’s Still Beautiful

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It’s Still Beautiful

by APastandFutureNerd

Summary

Four years have passed since the fall of the bluff and Hannibal decides it is time to take Will back to Florence. But once they have arrived, panic settles in and Will has to calm his husband down.

Spontaneously written on Twitter for the #ItsStillBeautiful Fest

Notes

Hey y’al!

First of all I am sorry for not updating the other stories but I have a huge major block and I’m happy to have written this one-shot for the fest at least. So I hope you're not too upset with me and that you enjoy reading this.

Inspired by: Bear’s Den - Fossils

I haven’t researched panic attacks and how to soothe someone’s suffering from it throughly and based it on one of my experiences with my own anxiety. I apologise if I have misrepresented anxiety and panic attacks.

Will was a bit rough with Hannibal at the end - it’s not how you soothe someone with an panic attack but I assumed that he is just impatient with him sometimes.

Hope you enjoy it nonetheless!

Four years after the fall of the bluff things had changed enormously. The public interest in the mysterious fate of the murder husbands had diminished. Big headlines turned to short articles in the corners of the newspapers until there were only Freddie Lounds' dubious speculations left.

Yet the murder husbands still lived, loved each other dearly, murdered and thrived. They had become inseparable after the fall even though Will had to find his footing first. After their long stay in South America, Hannibal decided it was time to take his beloved Will back to Florence again to forge new memories together. The old reminders of his brutal violence would probably always be there in the back of Will's mind palace like the scars on his skin. Faded and healed but never truly gone.

Nonetheless, Hannibal hoped this stay would provide him with happier associations and eventually rewrite their dark violent past in the city. Florence deserved more than the cruelty he had committed some years ago.

But when they left the private jet airport and made their way towards the black Lamborghini he had rented in advance, anxiety and fear accompanied Hannibal like a looming shadow throughout the trip. His heart kept hammering so fast in his chest, he thought it would burst at this rate and his stomach cramped in a painful way.His breathing was shallow and quick and thousands of irrational negative thoughts tainted his brilliant mind. Hannibal hated the sensation wholeheartedly.

Anxiety was something he had rarely experienced before and it made him feel weak and meek - something he had never been. Only during role play for Will but it had never been his true personality. He despised anxious, neurotic people like Franklyn Froideveaux and found it hard to accept he was human after all.

Even though Hannibal tried his best, he was unable to hide away his panic. Will saw through him, no matter how hard he attempted to conceal his vulnerable side from his lover. Will eyed him worriedly and finally squeezed his sweaty hand on on the gear change during the drive to ease his anxious state. "Calm down,Hannibal, it's alright that you brought me here again",Will remarked, smiling widely to soothe his husband who started to tremble and had to leave the highway and halt at a road houses and switch places with Will. "It's going to be a lot better this time." He patted his back, placed a kiss on his temple before he settled down in the driver's seat to finish the trip.

Hannibal smiled back at him but a lump formed in his throat at the memory of that same genuine angelic smile in the Uffizi gallery which forced him to remember everything that followed afterward he would still love to fix with time equations in his small notebook.

“Of course, Will. I’m fine. Everything will be fine ”, was all Hannibal managed to say in a hoarse voice before he turned his eyes back to the landscape passing by on the right side. But Will was not convinced, throwing an occasional checking glance at him. It was uncommon that Hannibal behaves like this. He had seen the sad look in his eyes, the regret and fear and thought it was ironic that Hannibal suffered more than him.

They finally arrived after a drive of twenty minutes at their rustic, spacious mediterranean villa, a restored farmhouse of the 18th century with a green lawn and trimmed hedges forming baroque geometric forms across the garden. It hovered majestically above the vast green vineyards and the sun-kissed roofs of Florence in the near distance.

As soon as they had heaved their luggage into their new home, they admired the spectacular view on the hills bathed in the golden rays of the Italian sun from the balcony with a glass of the finest Chianti in silence.

Hannibal avoided his eyes as he sipped from the wine. He was as shy as a school boy and didn’t appear like a dangerous killer. Will found it adorable. But he wanted to soothe him. Placing the glass down on the table, Will wrapped his arms around Hannibal’s waist from behind.

Hannibal exhaled as the warm, soft hands of his husband caressed his lovely belly that came with age despite his efforts,his hips and ass. Goosebumps spread on Hannibal’s neck.”Stay with me”, Will purred and nosed in Hannibal’s hair at the back.”I don’t have anywhere else to go.”

“You want to retreat ”, Will remarked before he bit into the exposed, tanned and wrinkled skin of his throat and pressed further tender kisses in the crook of his neck Hannibal arched back his head to receive a kiss on his lips and closed his eyes. “No, Will, I don’t.” Hannibal replied.

Bluish-green eyes observed the vulnerable man in his embrace. “You’re clearly worried and scared”, Will assessed. Hannibal wanted to back away and free himself from his embrace, clearly uncomfortable but his husband pulled him back. “Worried that I will be reminded and upset.”

Will’s right hand ruffled through his grey blonde hair while he kept Hannibal pressed against him with his left arm. He relented, sighed and looked up when Will didn’t kiss him. "Tell me, Hannibal. You promised to be open and honest with me when we married.” Will prompted.

A moment of silence in which Hannibal struggled to acknowledge to Will what was already obvious. It was only interrupted by the chirping of the circadas in the trees and the noise of the planes flying high above them in the sky, making their way to the Aeroporto di Firenze.

“You already know”, Hannibal countered, letting out another sigh. “What’s the point in telling you if you are already aware?” “Yes, but I want it to hear it from your mouth.” Will retorted. “No kiss if you continue to be so stubborn”, he threatened with furrowed eyebrows.

“I want you to look at me”, Will spoke again in his soft voice. Hannibal looked at him reluctantly, his eyes wandering slowly up to Will’s and Will noticed tears gleaming in his maroon eyes. “I know it’s hard to be raw and vulnerable, but if you don’t want to have another disaster like that, I need you to talk to me about your feelings, darling.” The last sentence seemed to convince Hannibal for he opened his mouth in defeat.

“Doubts and fear are ever gnawing at me.” Hannibal finally admitted in a raspy, shaky voice, swallowing harshly. Will kissed him and tried to wipe away his anguish. He understood that Hannibal was doubting himself for the decision to return to Florence but why was he afraid? “What are you afraid of?”Will inquired, stroking his cheekbones, removing the tears running down from his eyes with his thumb.

“I fear that you don’t feel comfortable here in Florence.That the past will haunt you, haunt us all over again.That you remember what a monster I am and what you have become and you abandon me forever.”The words did not spill easily from his lips and when Hannibal had finished his confession, Will let him go and pulled him into a long, tender kiss, tasting the salt of his tears on his lips.

“Oh,Hannibal”, Will sighed when their lips parted and he cupped his face into his hands. “I thought we have move past this already. It has been such a long time since that happened. I have forgiven you. Besides I was not that innocent either, remember?” He paused and gave him a loving, reassuring glance. “I will never leave you again. I promised it two years ago in front of the altar in Buenos Aires."

“Yes, but what if I’m doing something impulsive again“, Hannibal began, his chest heaving frantically but Will renders him silent with another quick kiss. “No what if. You have changed. I have changed. We made it this far together. We are no longer lovesick fools in denial.” He pressed another long kiss on his mouth.”The past is the past. You can’t change nor erase it. The scars and memories will always be there. What happened has happened. No mathematical equation can erase our history.” Will answered in a decisive tone. He gripped his shoulders a tad too tightly in his agitation, causing Hannibal to let out a pained gasp and pull back from him.

When Will noticed he uttered the words in such a harsh and impatient way he regretted it. It was not the way to talk to someone suffering from anxiety and he had a bad conscience being so rough with him. But the damage was done. Hannibal retreated once again into his distant composure and his face grew detached and cold. He had been stung by the hurting truth that the past could not simply be overwritten.He took a few steps away to the beautiful baroque railing, offended and hurt, but Will caught up. “Hey. Don’t leave before I have finished.” He grabbed his wrists and turned him around again, kissing his hands.

Will’s face softened and the impatience disappeared from his eyes. The loving, understanding look returned.When he remembered how Hannibal had soothed him in the past, the irritation disappeared like smoke.

“Sorry, Hannibal”, Will apologised when Hannibal looked away once more and wrestled from his grip. “I did not mean to be so harsh. I was just..irritated that you get upset because of something that is so far in the past.”

“I am not used to that either, Will.” Hannibal stated under his shallow breathing.”But you're not a great therapist.” He managed a faint smile.

Will chuckled. ”Sorry for that.”

“I want you to show me Florence.” Will said, pressing his lips against Hannibal’s, taking his breath away for some long moments and pushed him further against the balustrade with his chest . “I want to walk with you over the Ponte Vecchio, I want you to take me to the Uffizi Gallery again, to the Palazzo where you used to give lectures and even to the room in the palace where you wanted to eat my brain. And now breathe, darling, for God’s sake.”

Hannibal relaxed and started breathing normally again as his anxiety disappeared by using both a method he had always recommended to his neurotic patients. His usual controlled and smug self returned. He chuckled quietly. “I assure you, Will, there are lots of other sights that deserve more of our time than this room. This city is a true gem and it would be a shame to waste precious time on insignificant buildings.”

Will let out an amused laugh. “I don’t care where you take me to, Hannibal and which sights you want to show me first”, he murmured while unbuttoning Hannibal’s white shirt with his quick fingers until he felt his warm, damp, grey-haired chest under his fingers. "As long as I am with you it’s alright." The next kiss was slow and soft and it stretched out into minutes. Their tongues connected, locked and toyed with each other. It was akin to making love in bed. This languished kiss was a wordless promise made by Will to Hannibal to stay with him no matter what would happen.

Will pulled back a little bit and muttered into the mouth of Hannibal who was completely under the spell of his husband and looking at his lips with softly gleaming and adoring eyes just like four years ago on the cliff at Chesapeake Bay. “I just want you to know that it’s still beautiful to be with you. It’s nice to be back in Florence under better circumstances.”

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